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Jewish Ceremonial Art Displayed at the University of Dayton

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DAYTON, Ohio, September 14, 1973 --- Pieces of Jewish ceremonial art on display in the Kennedy Student Union for the month of September range in age from early 19th century to present day.

The newest artifact is a marriage contract designed and made by a Daytonian. David Moss executed his first contract when he and his wife Rosalyn were married in 1969. Since then he has completed some 30 contracts.

The contract on display at UD is of circular design on parchment. The circle symbolizes eternity, the eternity of love, according to Moss.

The display of artifacts was assembled by the Jewish Community Council from private individuals and synagogues in the community. The importance of Jewish holidays is represented by ceremonial objects created for each observance. Included in the display are a pewter Sabbath plate, a silver wrought Elijah cup and a ceramic Yahrzeit lamp.

One of the oldest artifacts is an oil burning, chanukah menorah used in the early 19th century in Persia. Chanukah celebrates the Maccabean victory 21 centuries ago against the Syrian empire which attempted to destroy the Jewish nation.

The menorah commemorates the lamp in the temple lit with oil sufficient to last only a day. Instead, the oil lasted eight days and became a symbol of Jewish survival.

Another symbol which for the Jews carries with it all the feelings of home is the head scarf worn by the mother of the home when she lights the Sabbath candles before the advent of the Sabbath.

Before the Sabbath meal the father of the house recites or chants the Kiddush, the prayer over wine, and the motzah which is the prayer over Sabbath bread, or cholla, which is covered by a cloth.

Kiddush cups are used exclusively for the Sabbath or holy day services.

The kiddush cup on display at the UD Kennedy Union was used exclusively during the middle 19th century for Sedar (Passover). One side of the cup shows the family at the Sedar table. The reverse side shows the artist's conception of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

The most visible item in the display is the Torah scroll. The Torah and its ornaments are the central objects of respect in the Synagogue. The mantle is green velvet with silver thread embroidery. The breast plate, the crown and the pointer are silver, and hand designed and executed.